

LONDON- WEST MIDLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Volume 5 | Technical Appendices

CFA17 | Offchurch and Cubbington
Baseline report (CH-001-017)
Cultural heritage

November 2013

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Department
for Transport

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Appendix CH-001-017

Environmental topic:	Cultural heritage	CH
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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the cultural heritage appendices

1.1.1 The cultural heritage appendices for the Offchurch and Cubbington community forum area (CFA17) comprise:

- baseline reports (this appendix);
- a gazetteer of heritage assets (Appendix CH-002-017);
- impact assessment (Appendix CH-003-017); and
- survey reports (Appendix CH-004-017).

1.1.2 Maps referred to throughout the cultural heritage appendices are contained in the Volume 5 cultural heritage map book.

1.2 Content and scope

1.2.1 This baseline provides part of the evidence base, along with Appendices CH-002-017, Appendix CH-003-017 and Appendix CH-004-017 against which the assessment of assets that may be affected by the Proposed Scheme can be determined. It collates information about known and potential heritage assets from a variety of sources and presents a chronological description and discussion of the development of the study area, placing assets within their historical and archaeological context.

1.2.2 The baseline is structured, as with other CFAs, as follows:

- Section 1 of the document provides introductory material relating to the scope of the assessment, study area and key data sources;
- Section 2 provides background info on geology and topography;
- Section 3 provides a chronological description of the archaeological and historical development of the area;
- Section 4 provides an overview of the built heritage resource;
- Section 5 relates to a map regression;
- Section 6 provides a description of the historic landscape, including parks, gardens and important hedgerows;
- Section 7 describes the archaeological character of the route. This is closely related to Appendix CH-003-017;
- Section 8 provides an overview of archaeological understanding and potential;
- Section 9 provides conclusions; and
- Section 10 provides information sources.

1.3 Study area

- 1.3.1 The Offchurch and Cubbington CFA lies within North Warwickshire District and comprises parts of the civil parishes of Offchurch, Cubbington and Weston-under-Wetherley.
- 1.3.2 All non-designated and designated assets within the land required for construction and within 500m of it have been detailed in this baseline assessment. In addition, designated heritage assets have been examined up to 2km either side of the boundary of land required for construction.
- 1.3.3 All identified assets are listed in Appendix CH-002-017 and shown on Maps CH-01-105b to CH-01-107 and CH-02-104 to CH-02-105 in the Volume 5 cultural heritage map book.

1.4 Data sources

- 1.4.1 Sources examined as part of this baseline assessment include published secondary sources, cartographic sources, Historic Environment Record data for undesignated heritage assets and English Heritage National Heritage List data for designated assets. A full list of published sources can be found in Section 11 of this appendix.

1.5 Surveys undertaken

- 1.5.1 The following surveys were undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process:
 - LiDAR survey of the majority of the Proposed Scheme and land around it (see Appendix CH-004-017);
 - hyperspectral survey of the majority of the land around the Proposed Scheme (see Appendix CH-004-017);
 - a programme of non-intrusive surveys including geophysical prospection (see Appendix CH-004-017); and
 - site reconnaissance field inspections to review the setting of historic assets and the character and form of the historic landscape.

2 Geology, topography and landform

- 2.1.1 The majority of the study area is located on the Keuper Series of the Mercia Mudstone Group. There are thin bands of Arden Sandstone and Blue Anchor formation beds at the southern end of the study area, c. 1km to the north-west of the Grand Union Canal along with a discrete patch of Interbed Argillaceous Limestone. The Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation which forms the border between the Dunsmore and Avon Valley character zones strays into the far north-west corner of the study area.
- 2.1.2 Alluvial deposits associated with the River Leam are crossed by the study area, as are Quaternary sand and silt Head deposits.
- 2.1.3 The Lower Lias deposits form a gently rolling tableland c. 100-150m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) which drain west towards the Avon through a series of tributaries, including the Leam which crosses the study area. The tributaries to these minor rivers drain in the opposite direction to the slope of the Lias platform, often at right angles to the main streams and produce a trellised drainage pattern. The Lias platform is marked to the west by a prominent escarpment, formed by White Lias Limestone which runs along the edge of the Avon valley from the Stour to the Leam. Limestones in the Lower Lias form a second low escarpment to the south-west.
- 2.1.4 The study area crosses The Feldon, which is generally accepted to be one of the main sub-divisions of Warwickshire (along with the Arden which lies to the north of the study area). The geology, soils and topography of this region has subsequently been influenced by human habitation to create the currently existing environment.
- 2.1.5 The Feldon is characterised by a gently undulating landscape of low hill and clay vales with large, open pasture fields and few woodlands and narrow river valleys. The main river within the study area, the Avon, drains from the north-east to the south-west. The clay vale lies in a broad band around the northern, eastern and southern edges of the area. The Lias limestone band that runs across the centre of the area has a varied, undulating landform. Woodland is more frequent here but remains a relatively minor component among pasture and arable fields. The presence of the limestone has led to a quarrying industry and the area is now characterised by disused quarries. The western edge of the Feldon contains more woodland and is characterised by large houses located within landscaped parks.
- 2.1.6 The northernmost 2km of the study area passes through Dunsmore which forms a transitional zone between the Feldon and the Arden area to the north. Dunsmore is centred on an area of former heathland associated with a low plateau of glacial deposits.

3 Archaeological and historical background

3.1 Early prehistory

Palaeolithic 500,000-10,000BC

- 3.1.1 The northern part of the study area has the potential to contain significant early prehistoric deposits. A Palaeolithic site of national and potentially international importance has been identified 2.1km to the north-east of the study area at Waverley Wood Farm Pit, where a concentration of Lower Palaeolithic artefacts along with the remains of a straight-tusked elephant has been identified within organic deposits associated with the gravels of the ancient Bytham River. These finds have been dated to c. 500,000 Before Present (BP)¹. The fresh condition of the Waverley Wood finds and their association with faunal remains, including plant macrofossils and Mollusca, suggests that this site and any others that may be uncovered in the vicinity have considerable research potential for investigating the chronology and character of very early human activity in the north-west of Europe². These finds are considered to be of national or possibly international significance and therefore of high value.
- 3.1.2 The study area crosses the route of the Bytham River (OFCo41, map CH-01-046) to the north-east of Cubbington. This river crossed southern Britain on a north-east to south-west axis in the Pleistocene period (c. 500,000 BP). This is a route now partially followed by the River Avon. It is widely believed that the Bytham valley was one of the main entry points for the first humans to exploit what is now England. Most of the deposits representing this system were subsumed by the Anglian ice sheet from c. 480,000 BP. Remnants, however, remain and have been mapped, allowing its probable course to be plotted^{3, 4, 5}.
- 3.1.3 Overall, a few sites have produced important assemblages of worked stone artefacts associated with the Bytham River and are of international significance. Most notable are recent discoveries made by The Ancient Human Occupation of Britain project⁶ along the coast of East Anglia. A series of sites at Happisburgh, Norfolk, have produced artefacts and associated palaeo-environmental evidence. The most recent findings from the Happisburgh 3 site, which are from the same deposits, may be as old as c. 970,000-930,000 BP (MIS25) or 860,000-810,000 BP (MIS21). 78 artefacts in fresh condition were recovered from fluvial gravels and fine laminated estuarine deposits infilling a series of channels, sealed by glacial deposits. The sedimentology suggests deposition by the ancestral Thames with some input from an early course of the Bytham River⁷. Analysis of the assemblage suggests the artefacts had been transported to the site from knapping areas elsewhere⁸. At Pakefield in Suffolk an

¹ Shotton et al (1993) The Middle Pleistocene deposits of Waverley Wood Pit, Warwickshire, England. *Journal of Quaternary Science*, 8, pp.293-325.

² Watt eds. (2011) *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

³ Lang and Buteux (2007) Lost but not forgotten: the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic occupation of the West Midlands. In: P Garwood, ed. *The Undiscovered Country: the early prehistory of the West Midlands*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp. 6-22 (fig 2.6).

⁴ McNabb (2007) *The British Lower Palaeolithic: Stones in Contention*. London: Routledge, fig 4.3.

⁵ Pettitt and White (2012) *The British Palaeolithic: Human Societies at the Edge of the Pleistocene World*. London: Routledge, fig 2.8.

⁶ www.ahobproject.org.

⁷ Parfitt et al. (2010) Early Pleistocene human occupation at the edge of the boreal zone in northwest Europe. *Nature* 466, pp.229-233.

⁸ Ibid.

interglacial channel sequence, attributed to MIS17 at c 680,000 BP, produced 34 flint artefacts and microdebitage. The channel was sealed by marine sands and glacial sediments. The recovered artefacts were very well preserved with the presence of microdebitage indicating on-site knapping occurred^{9, 10}. Other sites include High Lodge at Mildenhall in Suffolk where deposits associated within the middle reaches of the pre-Anglian Bytham floodplain date to c 500,000 BP (MIS 13). The assemblage of artefacts, in primary context, consisted of cores and refitting flakes, flake tools and scrapers¹¹. The rich artefact assemblage from the site at Warren Hill, 2km from High Lodge, is also assigned to Bytham deposits¹².

- 3.1.4 In Warwickshire the upper reaches of the Bytham follows a north-east route and associated deposits comprise the Baginton Formation which includes the Thurmaston and Brandon Members¹³. Two Lower Palaeolithic sites have been published in detail in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Scheme. The site at Waverley Wood Quarry, recorded during the 1980s, produced nine andesite and quartzite artefacts^{14, 15, 16, 17}. The second site at Wood Farm produced 50 artefacts and a flint handaxe. A summary of the deposit sequence recorded from Wood Farm suggests c. 7m of deposits overlying the organic channel fills at this location. The Wood Farm sequence was very similar to Waverley Wood Quarry¹⁸.
- 3.1.5 The Bytham River itself appears to have been destroyed during the Anglian glaciation which commenced c. 480,000 BP. There is very sparse evidence for human habitation in the area during the Middle Palaeolithic with humans apparently absent between c. 186,000-c. 60,000 BP. Handaxe finds have been made on the gravel terraces of the Avon dating from 60,000 BP.
- 3.1.6 There are no known Upper Palaeolithic assets in the study area. This period is as poorly understood in the region as the Lower and Middle periods. There is very little evidence of Upper Palaeolithic activity within the study area at this time, but again this is probably the result of uneven study rather than an absence of human activity.

Mesolithic 8000-6500BC

- 3.1.7 In the early Mesolithic period (8000-6500 BC) subsistence appears to have been dominated by large game hunting. The rising of sea levels led to the separation of Britain from mainland Europe with accompanying widespread afforestation. In the later Mesolithic (6500-4000 BC) hunting practices reflected this process of afforestation with a move to the hunting of woodland game including red and roe deer as well as wild pig, along with an intensive exploitation of both woodland plant and marine resources.

⁹ Parfitt et al. (2005) The earliest record of human activity in northern Europe. *Nature* 438, pp.1008–1012.

¹⁰ Parfitt (2008) Pakefield Cliffs: Archaeology and palaeo-environment of the Cromer Forest-bed Formation. In: Candy, J.R. Lee & A.M Harrison, Eds., *Quaternary of Northern East Anglia*. London: Quaternary Research Association, pp.130-136.

¹¹ Ashton et al. (1992) *High Lodge: excavations by G. de G. Sieveking 1962-68 and J. Cook 1988*. London: British Museum Press.

¹² Wymer et al. (1991) Warren Hill, Mildenhall, Suffolk (TL 744743). In: Lewis, S.G, Whiteman, C.A. & Bridgland, D.R. eds., *Central East Anglia and the Fen Basin Field Guide*. London: Quaternary Research Association, pp.50-57.

¹³ Keen et al. (2006) A Lower Palaeolithic industry from the Cromerian (MIS 13) Baginton Formation of Waverley Wood and Wood. *Journal of Quaternary Science*, 21, pp.457-470.

¹⁴ Shotton and Wymer (1989) Handaxes of Andesitic Tuff from Beneath the Standard Wolston Succession in Warwickshire. *Lithics* 10, pp.1-7.

¹⁵ Shotton et al., 1993.

¹⁶ Wise (1993) Waverley Wood. *Current Archaeology* 133, pp.12-14.

¹⁷ Keen et al., 2006.

¹⁸ Shotton et al. 1993, fig. 3.

- 3.1.8 The recording of finds scatters has not been accurate on the whole although more have been recorded in Warwickshire than in most other parts of the region. The excavation of Mesolithic sites in the region is rare and few have produced evidence for features or possible structures¹⁹. Sites appear to be focused on well-drained sites close to water sources, although this may be a biased impression created by fieldwalking projects that concentrate on ploughed fields in such areas. Alluvial deposition episodes may have hidden many sites located in river valleys and therefore Mesolithic activity may be far more widespread than previously assumed.

Neolithic 4000-2400BC

- 3.1.9 The Early Neolithic (4000-3400 BC) is defined by the first appearance in Britain of domesticated animal and plant species and associated agricultural technologies along with monumental architecture and ceramics. There has been little previous study of the Early Neolithic in the West Midlands. Some work has been carried out on settlement patterns and ceramics but a synthesis of this data has not been attempted.
- 3.1.10 Early Neolithic sites and finds are mostly concentrated on the edges of the region. Extensive work in the Avon valley has identified sites at Barford^{20, 21, 22}, Charlecote²³, and Wasperton²⁴; all located more than 10km to the south-west of the study area. Pollen analysis across the region has suggested that large-scale forest clearance began in the third millennium BC although hunter-gathering continued as a way of life in this period²⁵. Early Neolithic field monuments are very rare in the region although a possible long barrow has been identified at Hampton-in-Arden c. 5km north-west of the study area. Possible mortuary enclosures have been identified at a number of sites in the south-west of Warwickshire, between 10 and 20km to the south-west of the study area. There are no obvious large groups of Early Neolithic funerary monuments and enclosures in the region such as those found in areas such as Wessex and Sussex²⁶. Most of the material finds from the period have been recovered from isolated pits and from within alluvial and colluvial contexts.
- 3.1.11 The Middle Neolithic (3400-2800 BC) and the Late Neolithic (2900-2100 BC) see the introduction of new artefact categories, the appearance of new monument forms and the development of large ceremonial centres and landscapes. In the West Midlands the beginning of the Middle Neolithic is marked by widespread monument construction and the development of ceremonial centres. Middle and Late Neolithic is represented mainly by lithic scatters, which appear to represent widespread occupation of generally low intensity.

¹⁹ Garwood (2011) The earlier prehistory of the West Midlands in 2011. In: S. Watt, ed. *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.9-99.

²⁰ Oswald (1969) Excavations for the Avon/Severn Research Committee at Barford, Warwickshire. *Transactions & Proceedings of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 83, pp.1-64.

²¹ Loveday (1989) The Barford ritual complex: further excavations 1972 and a regional perspective. In: A. Gibson, ed. *Midlands Prehistory*, BAR British Series 204, pp. 51-84.

²² Woodward (2007) Ceremonial landscapes and ritual deposits in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods. In P. Garwood, ed., *The Undiscovered Country: the early prehistory of the West Midlands*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.182-93.

²³ Ford (2003) The Neolithic complex at Charlecote, Warwickshire. *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions*, 107, pp.1-39.

²⁴ Hughes and Crawford (1995) Excavations at Wasperton, Warwickshire: Part 1. *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions*, 99, pp. 9-47.

²⁵ Garwood, 2011.

²⁶ Ibid.

- 3.1.12 While no Neolithic sites or finds have been found locally, based on understanding gained from finds across the region as a whole, the southern end of the study area, near to the river Leam, would be the most likely area to yield any such remains.

3.2 Later prehistory

Bronze Age 2,400-700BC

- 3.2.1 The Early Bronze Age (2100-1500 BC) is represented in the archaeological record predominantly by large numbers of round barrows and burials as well as artefacts such as food vessels and collared urns along with metal artefacts such as flanged axes and riveted daggers. The clustering of round barrows in large groups appears to signify the development of ceremonial centres. Settlement sites of this period are still a rarity in the region.
- 3.2.2 Early Bronze Age environments in the region are not well understood as there is very little botanical or faunal evidence and there are few pollen diagrams relating to the period. There is also to date minimal environmental evidence either for agriculture or the exploitation of wild resources in the region.
- 3.2.3 In the West Midlands the transition from Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age is reasonably well-defined²⁷. Round barrow construction increases rapidly from c. 1900 BC with dense concentrations around the edge of the region and with evidence for wider woodland clearance and agriculture.
- 3.2.4 A group of possible round barrows is located to the west of Print Wood, 505m to the east of the land required for construction, in the adjacent Ladbroke and Southam CFA (LBS095). These barrows are of regional significance and therefore of medium archaeological value. They are also located away from the main concentration of other barrows in the region, which are mainly clustered in upland areas and strung out along the major river valleys.
- 3.2.5 Early Bronze Age round barrow evidence is abundant with over 900 round barrows and ring ditches recorded, approximately half of these include a surviving mound. Most were constructed between 2100 and 1500 BC although some may be slightly earlier or later. The spatial distribution of these monuments is closely related to the geographical and historical incidence of farming. Most earthen mounds are found in upland areas and pasture lands, while ring ditch sites are found in arable areas where barrows rarely survive as standing monuments. This destruction has accelerated since the expansion of arable farm practices in the later 17th century and intensified with the introduction of mechanised farming. A number of barrows may have also been lost during urbanisation in the 19th and 20th centuries. Mounds also appear to have been hidden by alluviation and lost within the patches of woodland which now cover the area.
- 3.2.6 Sixty-four barrows have been excavated in the region, providing information on their construction, funerary practices and artefactual and chronological evidence but little dating evidence and few radiocarbon dates. The barrows tend to be arranged in clusters, sometimes up to 20-30 strong although not the linear barrow cemeteries

²⁷ Ibid.

common in the Wessex region. These barrow groups may have been focal points in a ceremonial landscape that served scattered settlements in the area. Burials are a mixture of secondary inhumations within barrows and those within pits. Primary burials below round mounds are relatively rare and grave goods are often poor or absent altogether.

- 3.2.7 There is virtually no evidence for Early Bronze Age settlements in the West Midlands and this is consistent with the pattern found across Britain in this period. Many may have been located close to rivers and subsequently destroyed by fluvial activity. Generally there seems to be a lack of domestic pottery such as biconical urns and collared urns at this time. Surface artefact collection does not add to our knowledge of settlement patterns except in terms of overall distribution and density of activity at a regional level. Overall settlement activity appears to be concentrated around the margins of the area with the central part of the West Midlands seemingly under-developed and sparsely populated.
- 3.2.8 Middle to Late Bronze Age finds are rare in the region with few well-dated ceramic sequences which means that knowledge of the period is somewhat patchy (Hurst, 2011). This has led to an over reliance on typologies from neighbouring areas which may not be wholly accurate for the West Midlands. Sites from this period are often funerary monuments, few of which have been excavated in the modern era. These are mainly barrow sites, with some open cemeteries. Settlement sites are very rare but when found have been extensive and unenclosed. Burnt mounds are a more common feature of the area, perhaps reflecting early exploitation of the region's forests for charcoal making and metal working.

Iron Age 700BC-AD43

- 3.2.9 In the Iron Age, settlement evidence in the region becomes more visible with enclosures identified from aerial photographs a particularly common feature. These enclosures are often associated with round houses. These settlements appear to be fairly short-lived with little internal development. The landscape becomes far more intensively farmed with some extensive field systems recorded. In places these systems are enclosed by large landscape features such as the linear banks found 19km north-west of the Proposed Scheme at Hob Ditch Causeway in Solihull in Warwickshire. Extensive settlement sites have been found in Warwickshire on less well-drained soils than is common in the south of England. At the same time funerary practices are less commonly recorded. Burial evidence is limited compared to that for the later Bronze Age. Some individual burials have been recorded in Warwickshire although cemeteries have not been found as yet.
- 3.2.10 Four cropmark sites have been identified within the study area from aerial photographs held by the National Monuments Record (NMR). These may be prehistoric in origin (OFC28, map CH-01-045). An incomplete circular enclosure containing a small rectangular enclosure (OFC009, map CH-01-045) has been identified to the south-east of Burnt Heath Farm, while a second incomplete enclosure has been noted to the south of Fosse Farm (OFC014, map CH-01-045). A U-shaped linear cropmark (OFC028, map CH-01-045) crossed by a second linear and forming a rough A-shaped feature is located to the north-east of Field's Farm, while a series of

five incomplete circular enclosures (OFCo29, map CH-01-045) have been noted immediately to the north-west.

3.3 Romano-British AD43-410

- 3.3.1 The West Midlands is located on the boundary between the extensively settled south of Britain in the south and east of the region, and the militarised north in the north and west. The Avon valley for example appears to have been culturally more akin to southern and eastern Britain with more extensive civilian settlements and fewer military sites. The region is rich in minerals as well as agricultural land and this led to the area being extensively exploited in the Roman period. Most of this exploitation appears to be located in the south and west of the region, and away from the study area itself.
- 3.3.2 The West Midlands is a region rich in natural resources, however, how these resources were exploited is poorly understood. There is a good deal of evidence for pottery manufacture in the area but little is known about metal and glass working. Mining, quarrying and salt-working that is known to have taken place in the region although its scale and structure are poorly understood. The more settled areas in the south and east of the region in this period appears to contrast with the less well-populated, traditional areas to the north and west although it is unclear as to what extent this is a reflection cultural traditions, land use geology and natural resources. As with most parts of Britain, the ending of Roman rule and the transition to early medieval England is poorly understood.
- 3.3.3 The former Roman road known as the Fosse Way (OFCo12, map CH-01-045) crosses the boundary of the land required for construction on a south-west to north-east alignment, c. 2.8km from its south-eastern end. Although the road itself no longer survives as a surface feature, deposits associated with it may be sealed by both medieval and post-medieval road surfaces, and there may be buried archaeological deposits immediately to the north-west and south-east of the road.
- 3.3.4 The presence of the road and the high number of Roman sites in the area (including a settlement at Glasshouse Wood some 6km to the north of the CFA), and the location of the Fosse Way running through the CFA, suggests that there is a potential for Roman remains both near the road and elsewhere.

3.4 Early medieval AD410-1066

- 3.4.1 This period saw the development of new settlements and settlement patterns across the region along with the spread of Christianity and the founding of churches across the region. Many of the region's towns at this time (Hooke, 2011). Much of this change is not represented in the archaeological record but has been demonstrated from documentary research. The kingdom of Greater Mercia was established in the region, while on a smaller scale the fragmented settlement pattern that had been established in the prehistoric period and continued through the Roman era was developed into the manorial system that formed the basis of medieval agrarian society.
- 3.4.2 Whether these social changes reflect major changes in the population of the region has yet to be established. There is evidence both for the incursion of possibly Germanic people and for the continuation of population largely evident in the –

admittedly – limited burial evidence found in Warwickshire, including two burials within the study area (OFC011, map CH-01-045).

- 3.4.3 Archaeological evidence for early medieval settlement in the region is extremely limited. The ceramic record is also difficult to follow as pottery largely disappears from the archaeological record at the end of the Romano-British period, only re-appearing in the mid Anglo-Saxon period. It does appear however that the scattered settlement characteristic of the later prehistoric and Roman periods continues into this era with nucleation into the villages typical of the later medieval period only occurring late into the period, possibly under royal or ecclesiastical influences. Warwickshire also contains some evidence for high status timber buildings, sometimes interpreted as palaces, such as the sites at Hatton Rock and Long Itchington which date from the 8th century.
- 3.4.4 The Roman road system appears to have been preserved and used, along with the waterways, as the main communication routes through the area. The Fosse Way (OFC012, map CH-01-045) is one example.

3.5 Medieval AD1066-1540

- 3.5.1 The later medieval period saw a steady growth in population, the expansion of settlements, the development of the manorial system and the growth in power of the church²⁸ together with the attendant development of the parishes, including Offchurch, Weston under Wetherley and Cubbington.
- 3.5.2 Warwickshire has been instrumental in the development of medieval rural studies. John Rous recorded the desertion of villages in the 15th century while William Dugdale produced the first county distribution map of deserted medieval settlements in 1656. In more recent studies in the 1960s^{29, 30, 31}, patterns of nucleated and dispersed settlement have been identified across the region with the former located in intensively settled open landscapes and the latter more associated with woodland landscapes. This division is often represented in Warwickshire in the distinction between the Arden and Feldon regions of the county, although in reality the divisions between the two are far less obvious. Studies within the county have been concentrated mainly on the Feldon with a number of deserted medieval settlements excavated.
- 3.5.3 Weston Mill (OFC038, map CH-01-046), which appears to have served Stoneleigh Abbey, located to the north-west of the study area, survives as a series of foundations and watercourses 70m to the east of the boundary of land required for construction.
- 3.5.4 The medieval period also saw the beginning of industries in the towns and in the countryside. Pottery, tile and brick manufacture was a feature of the area although actual sites have been hard to find and few have been excavated. Known quarry sites too are rare for this period.

²⁸ Hunt (2011) The Medieval period. In: S. Watt, ed. *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp. 173-210.

²⁹ Thorpe (1965) The Lord and the Landscape, Illustrated through the Changing fortunes of a Warwickshire Parish, Wormleighton. *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 80, pp.38-77.

³⁰ Roberts (1965) Moated sites in midland England. *Transactions & Proceedings of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 80, pp.26-37.

³¹ Roberts (1968) A Study of the Medieval Colonisation of the Forest of Arden. *Warwickshire Agricultural History Review*, 16 (2), pp.101-113.

- 3.5.5 Re-planning affected many settlements although the extent, the socio-economic context and whether it was a feature of all settlement types or only nucleated ones remain unclear.
- 3.5.6 Offchurch was part of the Barony of the Priory of Coventry, which likely influenced the how and when the parish's fields were enclosed. Cubbington was held by the Prior of Coventry and grants were made to Stoneleigh Abbey, c. 3.5km to the north-west, from the estate at Cubbington as early as 1251. Lands held by Stoneleigh Abbey within the Cubbington estate included a windmill recorded in 1355 as belonging to Stoneleigh Abbey and owing tithes to Kenilworth Priory. The Cubbington estate remained mostly open field for some time, with 51% of the parish (1,085 of 2,112 acres) not being enclosed until a private Act of Parliament in 1767³².
- 3.5.7 The study area is rich in medieval settlements and field systems, reflecting the intensity of medieval activity in the area as a whole. The remains of a shrunken village at Manor Farm (OFC024, map CH-01-045) border the boundary of land required for construction.
- 3.5.8 Offchurch itself is an ancient village. Earthworks surrounding the existing settlement provide evidence of shrinkage and most of the fields to the south and east of the village are reorganised piecemeal enclosures or large, irregular fields that may have previously been piecemeal enclosures. Some ridge-and-furrow is still present near the village. A total of five plots of ridge-and-furrow earthworks have been recorded across the study area (OFC 027, 036, 044, 047, 048, map CH-01-045 to 046). Further medieval earthworks have been identified at Offchurch (OFC 023, map CH-01-045). These form an enclosure c.230m south-west of the boundary of land required for construction. Other medieval earthworks and deposits associated with extant built heritage are likely to survive in the village cores and particularly near the medieval churches.
- 3.5.9 Aside from the earthworks at Offchurch, the nearby villages of Hunningham and Cubbington also contain areas of earthworks identified as evidence of medieval shrinkage. Ridge-and-furrow exists within the larger irregular fields, the edges of which follow existing hedges. This attests not only to the fields' historic use as open field, but also to the antiquity of the hedges in that area and the likelihood that this area was also subject to piecemeal enclosure.
- 3.5.10 Areas of ancient woodland within the study area include North and South Cubbington Woods in Cubbington parish, and Weston Wood in Weston-under-Wetherley parish. Both woods include evidence of medieval woodland management consisting of an extensive network of ditches and banks, as well as coppicing. Both woods are recorded on the Warwickshire historic environment record (HER).

3.6 Post medieval AD1450-1901

- 3.6.1 The post-medieval period began with the Reformation and the consequent break-up of the monastic estates and their transfer to secular ownership. The expansion of trade across Britain and from Britain to the expanding empire had a profound impact

³² Salzman, ed. (1951) Parishes: Cubbington. *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 6: Knightlow hundred*, pp.74-78. British History Online.

on the region with the expansion of existing extractive industries³³. From the late 18th century onwards the Industrial Revolution led to the rapid expansion of the region's towns, the creation of canal and railway networks and the formation of the present character of the West Midlands.

- 3.6.2 Two industrial monuments survive within the study area. Part of the route of the Warwick–Napton Canal (now part of the Grand Union Canal) forms the southern limit of the study area, while the route of the former Warwick to Rugby railway will cross the route c. 2.3km to the north-west of this.
- 3.6.3 Generally within the study area, agricultural land and heathland was enclosed between the 16th and 19th centuries, with large rectilinear fields marking out the few areas of open field agriculture that persisted beyond the late medieval period. Most of the open heathland was also enclosed at this time, with long, straight hedges of hawthorn and blackthorn with frequent hedgerow trees, at decline of the wool trade in the 16th century Mills became important along the major watercourses. The few remaining open fields were finally enclosed in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The road system, became simplified with relatively few direct roads that radiated from settlements. Urban centres such as Coventry and Rugby expanded rapidly with the Industrial Revolution from the early 19th century, encroaching agricultural areas and enveloping former villages. However the study area itself remained agricultural with an enclosed field pattern. Limestone quarrying for the cement industry flourished in the central part of the Feldon region, leaving the former quarries of today.
- 3.6.4 Offchurch parish is characterised by systems of enclosed fields dating to this period with the village of Offchurch itself located in the north-western corner of the parish. The village remained confined to the medieval core, as shown on the 1848 Tithe Map. The place names of Sutton, Parlour and Floodgate the east of the village, some of which lies within the land required for construction, suggest they used for foxhunting.
- 3.6.5 A small section of the boundary of land required for construction passes across the far south-western corner of Weston-under-Wetherley parish. The parish tithe and enclosure maps for Weston have not survived.
- 3.6.6 Both the parish tithe and enclosure maps for Cubbington have not survived. However Ordnance Survey (OS) maps dating from 1878 depict a landscape of enclosed field systems, while Cubbington village also seems to have remained confined to its medieval core.
- 3.6.7 The site of a timber bridge, which may be post-medieval in origin, crossed the River Leam to the south of Weston-under-Wetherley (OFC038, map CH-01-046) c. 100m to the north-east of the boundary of land required for construction.
- 3.6.8 The route of the Grand Union Canal (OFC004, map CH-01-044) is crossed by the Proposed Scheme. Although the canal was opened in 1829, most of it was constructed in the early to mid-19th century.

³³ Belford (2011) *The archaeology of everything – grappling with post-medieval, industrial and contemporary archaeology*. In: S. Watt, ed. *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp.211-236.

3.7 20th century/modern AD1901-present

- 3.7.1 The 20th century saw the continued rapid expansion of industrial centres such as Coventry and Rugby, as well as smaller settlements such as Leamington. The growing population of the region, and the increase in commuting from, led to a rapid rise in the populations of the small nucleated settlements across the study area with new housing estates constructed around the fringes of both Offchurch and Cubbington.
- 3.7.2 The Second World War “Starfish” or bombing decoy site (OFC034, map CH-01-045) is the most significant of the 20th century sites although little seems to survive. Such sites were often ephemeral, consisting of bonfires, lighting and other pyrotechnics.
- 3.7.3 The landscape within the parishes of Offchurch, Weston-under-Wetherley and Cubbington retained some post-medieval enclosed character through the 20th and into the 21st century. Arable cultivation dominated, particular from the onset of the Second World War until the 21st century. Fields were enlarged and hedgerows removed resulting in a less intensive pattern.
- 3.7.4 A reservoir was constructed at Burnt Firs to the south-east of Offchurch after the Second World War.

4 Built heritage

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides baseline information relating to built heritage assets within the land required for construction, 500m study area and within 2km of the centreline. The section provides the following information:

- broad overview of the character and form of the settlement pattern within the area;
- detailed descriptions of all built heritage assets wholly or partially within the land required for construction;
- detailed descriptions of key built heritage assets within the 500m study area; and
- descriptions of other key designated built heritage assets that lie outside of the 500m study area but within 2km of the centreline.

4.1.2 Further information on these and other built heritage assets can be found in the Gazetteer in Appendix CH-002-017.

4.2 Overview of settlement character and key assets

4.2.1 Within the study area, the historic landscape of the CFA is predominantly fieldscape, with a few small, dispersed settlements to the east. The main settlements in the study area are the small villages of Offchurch, Weston-under-Wetherley, Cubbington and Hunningham, each with a historic core with an ancient church and a number of historic houses of 17th century origin or earlier.

4.2.2 Offchurch is a scattered settlement with two main foci. On the hill to the west lies the ancient church and a few larger buildings (mostly former farms), and to the east at the base of the hill at the Junction of Welsh Road and School there is a small dense area of historic cottages (some of possibly 16th or 17th century date) interspersed with later 19th and 20th century buildings. Modern infill in former garden or field plots has increased the density in this area.

4.2.3 The villages are generally linear in form with little great evidence of early planning. All the villages grew post medieval period, either with the addition of housing along former country roads and tracks or by the creation of small developments and new roads. Typical in this region, there are a number of brick dwellings in each village dating from the later 17th to the early 21st centuries and some civic and commercial properties.

Built Heritage assets within the land required for construction.

4.2.4 Built Heritage assets within the land required for construction include a number of designated and non-designated structures, ranging from canal structures to agricultural buildings.

Longhole Bridge (OFCoo1) and Grand Union Canal (OFCoo4)

- 4.2.5 Longhole Bridge and Grand Union Canal (OFCoo1 and 004, map CH-01-044) includes a section of the route of the Warwick and Napton Canal opened in 1800 (amalgamated into the Grand Union Canal Company in 1929) and also includes Longhole Bridge. This is Bridge No.31, a single arch brick bridge carrying a road/track (the Ridgeway, OFCoo2, map CH-01-044) over the canal. The bridge has a red brick parapet with blue brick coping. It is primarily a bridge from 1790s but with later repairs. During the Second World War, what appear to be Home Guard defences, were placed on the bridge, which included narrowing the carriageway and the emplacement of concrete cylinders, none of which survive.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.6 The bridge is defined by its association with the canal; its entire purpose is as an integral part of this linear asset although it carries a far older route-way (the Ridgeway) across the canal. The purpose of the bridge is, entirely functional and was designed for purely practical reasons. The rural setting of the bridge and canal does make an important contribution to its setting. Although the canal should be seen as an industrial transport route, the scenic properties of canals have long been recognised.

Fields Farm (OFCo30)

- 4.2.7 Fields Farm (OFCo30, map CH-01-045) is an historic farm complex consisting of a large house with distinctive double-storey bay windows. The house is undated and appears to be late 18th or early 19th century in origin but it is possible it may be earlier. The extensive farmyard includes a large attached barn and a number of possible stables, byres and ancillary buildings built around a large courtyard. The barns are mostly brick built and largely late 18th or early 19th century in date. This appears to be largely a planned 18th or early 19th century farm with an ordered and rational scheme of brick buildings laid out around a central yard. Modern prefabricated silos and barns lie within the former farmyard and around the site. Buildings are shown on 1848 Tithe map, the 1887 OS map and the preliminary OS drawing from 1813 for the subsequent 1-inch map. The area is not covered by the 1695 estate map.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.8 Like many farms in Warwickshire it may have medieval origins. The post enclosure fieldscape in which the farm is set contributes to its significance as a planned farm and the fieldscape may well be contemporaneous. Both demonstrate a period of large-scale change in the local landscape.

Lower Grange (OFCo35)

- 4.2.9 Lower Grange (map CH-01-046) is an L-shaped range of buildings located to the south-east of Cubbington at the far end of a long access track. The buildings appear to be 18th or early 19th century in origin and may date to the period of enclosure. Buildings shown on 1887 OS map are present, but much altered with modern additions which has affected their significance. The buildings and access track do not appear to be shown on the preliminary OS drawing from 1813, prepared for the subsequent series of 1 inch maps but they are shown on the 1 inch map itself from 1834. The area is not covered by 1771 map

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.10 The buildings sit within land which retains much of its post-enclosure form and appearance; setting makes a limited contribution to their significance as it has remained largely unchanged since enclosure.

4.3 Key built heritage assets within 500m of the land required for construction

The village of Offchurch (OFC 022)

- 4.3.1 The village of Offchurch is characterised by green open spaces interspersed with a variety of houses of different periods, together with long views into open countryside. There are two main parts to the village: an upper part around the church and Main Street and a lower part along Welsh Road, both containing a small number of important listed buildings together with undesignated buildings of historic interest. These two areas are linked by the steep School Hill and together these form three sides to a large, open, agricultural space within the centre of the village.
- 4.3.2 Notable designated assets within the village (OFC022) include:
- Church of Saint Gregory, Offchurch is a Grade II* listed church located in the higher western part of the village. It has an 11th-12th century nave and chancel. The chancel was enlarged in the late 13th century and in the 15th century the tower was added. The church was restored in the 19th century. The setting of the church with its churchyard and on a hill overlooking the scattered community contributes strongly to its significance.
 - Offa House (The Retreat) is a Grade II listed house from the early 18th century, with later additions to the rear. It was once a rectory and is located on raised ground close to church. It is of red brick with painted chamfered quoins an old plain-tile half-hipped roof, and brick stacks to the rear. The house includes landscaped gardens recommended for local listing. The setting of the house, in its elevated location and with its historical gardens makes a strong contribution to its significance.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.3 The village retains a rural and agricultural character with historic associations to the surrounding agricultural landscape. The setting of the village makes a strong contribution to its significance; this is, in part, due to the dispersed nature of settlement over a very long period of time.

Cubbington Conservation Area (OFC043)

- 4.3.4 The core historic settlement area of Cubbington is medieval in origin, although the village is now almost part of the north-eastern spread of Leamington Spa due to 20th century expansion. The centre of the village, contained within the Conservation Area, retains its historic character and is relatively little changed since the 19th century. The small CA is centred on the Norman church of St Mary Cubbington, which is thought to have replaced a Saxon Church, and Churchyard. Church Lane the main entrance into the CA has steep banks to each side. At the junction between the High Street and Church Lane there is an important group of buildings including the Manor House, the

Old Manor House and the public house. As the High Street curves away from the junction, the buildings are generally small and of late 18th century date. Notable designated built heritage within the village include:

- The Grade I listed church of St Mary Cubbington consists of chancel, flanked by modern organ chamber and vestries, clerestoried nave with north and south aisles, south porch and west tower. The earliest part of existing fabric is south arcade of nave dating from early 12th century and the late 12th century tower at the western end. Aisles and the south door were rebuilt during the 13th century. The windows belong to the 14th century when the chancel was also rebuilt. In 1885 the north arcade was rebuilt, both aisles extended eastwards to form vestries, and the porch rebuilt. The nave and chancel roofs were renewed in 1899. The external masonry of medieval portions is of red sandstone ashlar, with extensions to aisles, the top courses of tower, battlements, and the wall of the south aisle in grey sandstone. The church includes a separate Grade II listed churchyard wall and gates, consisting of a 19th century sandstone ashlar retaining wall to south-east side of churchyard, fronting on to Church Hill and a pair of tall square gate piers with late 19th century cast iron gates.
- The Grade II listed Old Manor house is a large L-shaped house of which the east limb and east gable of the main front facing on to New Street, are of c. 16th century date. This portion is timber-framed with painted brick infill panels. There is a late 17th century sandstone ashlar addition to west. Tree ring analysis carried out in 1989 gave an estimated felling date of 1324 for the timbers used in the construction of the building, with a possible range from 1313 to 1344. The dating was considered consistent with architectural style and carpentry techniques observed.
- The Grade II listed house at 19 High Street is a two storey timber framed house with cross-wing at west and 18th century range at right angles, though the house probably dates from the 17th century. The front has been refaced in 18th century red brick but timber framing is exposed at the rear with some wattle and daub. It has a steeply pitched plain tile roof with gabled ends to north and south. Brick ridge chimney stacks are seen at gable ends.
- A group of Grade II listed buildings at 2, 4, 6, and 8 Church Lane also probably date to the 17th century. They consist of a range of timber-framed cottages encased in secondary brick and rendered. The range has a steeply pitched plain tile roof with gabled ends. The framing is exposed on the facade of No.6.
- The Grade II listed manor is a late 18th century house which incorporates the remains of an earlier 17th century timber-framed structure. It is of red brick, with the ground floor faced in sandstone ashlar, and has stone quoins and keyblocks. It has a steeply pitched plain tile roof with stone coped gable ends. The house is L-shaped with two storeys and attic.
- Cubbington Church of England Primary School is a Grade II listed mid 19th century red brick school with master's house incorporated. The building has two main steeply pitched plain tile ranges with gabled ends which share a projecting central porch facing onto the school yard (to north). The school was built in 1846 in Gothic style with crenulations to side range, tracery to the two

main windows facing the yard and a Gothic arch above the main entrance doorway. There are angle buttresses to the school rooms and porch. The interior comprises two large school rooms, 36 x 30ft each, with gables to front and lower flanking wings at right angles. The master's house is to the north and a cloakroom to the south.

- The Vicarage is a Grade II listed red brick building constructed in 1821, with low pitched slate roof with hipped ends and wide projecting eaves. The two storey tall main house has a square plan, with a later addition in the same style to the east side. The main entrance is on the west elevation and consists of a portico with a pair of columns attached.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.5 The CA largely has an inward focus and the key views are within the CA rather than away from it. The setting of the CA makes little contribution to its significance, partly due to its inward looking nature and partly due to modern developments in and around the village.

- 4.3.6 Key designated heritage assets within 500m of the land required for construction, but outside of the main villages of Offchurch and Cubbington include:

Weston Hall and pigeoncote (OFCo51)

- 4.3.7 Buildings shown on both the 1887 OS map and the preliminary OS drawing from 1813 for the subsequent 1-inch map. No earlier maps are available. The pigeoncote Grade II listed and is a late 18th century square red brick structure with brick modillion eaves cornice. It includes a pyramidal plain tile roof with glazed lantern with leaded panes, leaded cupola and weather vane. Attached to east is an 18th century red brick building with timber-framing exposed in east gable.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.8 Some of the buildings around the pigeoncote and the pigeoncote itself have been altered and converted to dwellings in recent times. Although the manor site itself is much altered the farmyard setting and the wider garden and fieldscape all contribute to the significance of the asset.

New House Farmhouse in Cubbington (OFCo52)

- 4.3.9 A Grade II listed late 18th century red brick house with steeply pitched plain tile roof with gabled ends. The house consists of two storeys and attic with three bays. It also has brick modillion eaves cornice. The front has a central six panel door with semi-circular fanlight in a pedimented doorcase. There are several late 18th or early 19th century farm buildings to the north of the main house.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.10 The house is set in open farmland with woods to the west which provide a backdrop to the setting of the house. Large car parks and modern planting have detracted from the significance of the setting, but the rural nature of the setting contributes to the significance of the asset.

5 Historic map regression

- 5.1.1 The analysis of the cartographic evidence for the study area has been integrated within the archaeological and historical baseline narrative (Sections 4.6-4.8 above).

6 Historic landscape

6.1 Historic landscape characterisation

- 6.1.1 The Feldon is characterised by a gently undulating landscape of low hill and clay vales with large, open pasture fields and few woodlands and narrow river valleys. The main river within the study area, the Avon, drains from the north-east to the south-west. The clay vale lies in a broad band around the northern, eastern and southern edges of the area. Woodland is more frequent in the lias limestone area here but remains a relatively minor component among pasture and arable fields. The presence of the limestone has led to a quarrying industry and the area is now characterised by disused quarries. The western edge of the Feldon contains more woodland and large houses within landscaped parks.
- 6.1.2 Dunsmore is centred on an area of former heathland associated with a low plateau of glacial deposits. These deposits have led to the creation of thin soils which were worked-out in the prehistoric period, rapidly creating the heathlands which dominated the area until improvements in agriculture led to these areas being reclaimed for agriculture over the past two centuries.
- 6.1.3 Like the Feldon area to the south, this is predominantly a planned landscape of large fields and small villages, although unlike the Feldon it also has extensive woodlands. The area is primarily agricultural with extensive pasture and arable fields, many established over former areas of common land and heath. These form a flat, open landscape. The study area is crossed by the narrow valley of the River Avon. This valley is mainly in-filled with alluvial deposits from past flooding episodes although isolated areas of un-alluviated gravel terrace also occur. The arable fields often extend up to the river although there are also some surviving sections of remnant flood meadows. Much of the region was cleared of woodland and settled in prehistory especially on the easily-worked soils of the main plateau and along the fertile river valleys. The higher areas appear to have been worked to exhaustion as early as the Anglo-Saxon period. The productive land was densely settled by the later medieval period and farmed in two and three field systems. Depopulation of the area continued slowly through the later medieval period with the land enclosed in the 18th and 19th centuries. The fieldscapes of the Offchurch and Cubbington CFA reflect an early system of enclosure, with planned or Parliamentary enclosures being rare and centred mostly on the northern-most part of the CFA. Most fields are irregularly shaped and small, with curvilinear hedgerow boundaries and numerous dog-legs. This suggests early piecemeal enclosures, followed perhaps by later consolidations and removal of some internal hedges to enlarge the original fields. A comparison of modern field patterns with those identified on the 1st edition OS maps indicates much of the consolidation and internal boundary loss has been relatively recent. Ridge-and-furrow earthworks are found throughout the CFA, including concentrations near Cubbington.
- 6.1.4 At the northern end of the CFA, between the village of Cubbington and the boundary of this CFA with the Stoneleigh, Kenilworth and Burton Green CFA, very large, post-war fields are more common than the smaller, irregular fields to the south. Examination of 1st edition OS maps indicates that these fields were previously characterised as Planned Enclosure. This contrasts with the very large post-war fields

in the southern half of the CFA, where early OS maps show piecemeal enclosure-type character.

- 6.1.5 In the south of the CFA, the previously-wooded nature of the area is evident in small assarts south of Print Wood. Nearby place-names such as Burley, Fir Tree, Woodmeadow and Wood Farm suggest much of the land between the ancient woodlands (Print Wood and Ufton Wood) was once wooded. North of Cubbington and into the Stoneleigh, Kenilworth and Burton Green CFA, woods again stand out at North and South Cubbington Woods, Weston Wood and Waverley Wood. Those areas of very large post-war fields identified as being small, irregular fields at the time of the 1st edition OS maps may represent areas of woodland assarting.

6.2 Historic parks and gardens

- 6.2.1 There are no Grade I, II* or II registered parks within 2km of the area of land required for the Proposed Scheme. One undesignated garden of local historical significance at Offa House (part of OFCo22) is an asset of low significance. The 18th century house includes landscaped gardens. Set within Offchurch Village to the west of the main settlement, a small part of the garden is just within 500m of the boundary of land required for construction.

6.3 Important hedgerows

- 6.3.1 Three hedgerows within the study area meet criteria 1 to 5 of Schedule One, Part II of the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations and hence can be deemed to be important under the terms of the Regulations. These include hedgerows that run along the route of the Fosse Way (OFCo15, map CH-01-046) (an archaeological site) as well as one along Parish boundaries (coincident with the edge of a Natural England defined ancient woodland [South Cubbington Wood]). In addition, there is a hedgerow (OFC53, map CH-01-046) along the boundary between the Offchurch and Cubbington CFA with the Stoneleigh, Kenilworth & Burton Green CFA that coincides with parish and constituency boundaries (OFC37, map CH-01-046). Well-hedged, small, irregularly shaped fields are a defining characteristic of the landscape in the area.

7 Archaeological character

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 To determine the archaeological potential for the study area, it was sub-divided into archaeological character areas (ACA). These ACAs are derived from a consideration of the current topography, geology and current land use of the area. From these factors the potential for recovery of archaeological remains are considered.
- 7.1.2 From these broad character areas, the landscape was further subdivided into archaeological sub-zones (ASZ), which have allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the archaeological potential of the CFA. The study area for the CFA has been sub-divided into 10 ASZs. Although initially defined and characterised by current land use, a number of additional factors have determined the potential of these sub-zones to contain archaeological remains of significance. These factors include topography, geology, historic character and distribution of known archaeological finds, sites and assets.

7.2 Character areas

- 7.2.1 The Archaeological Character Areas ACAs described below extend from south to north within the study area.

ACA 1: Feldon

- 7.2.2 The Feldon covers most of south-eastern Warwickshire and consists mainly of a gently undulating landscape of low hills and clay vales established over Keuper Marl geology. The area is characterised by post-medieval enclosed fields with few woodlands, a heavy clay soil and frequent compact villages. Land use is dominated by pasture with a number of surviving medieval ridge-and-furrow systems recorded across the area. The Feldon is predominantly an open landscape and is sparsely wooded. It is crossed by narrow river valleys, in particular the Avon and its tributary, the Leam. Although narrow, these valleys do contain some isolated gravel terrace deposits. The section of the Feldon included within the study area is dominated by the clay vale. The clay soils are fertile and alkaline but poorly-drained and as a result are suited to pasture which in turn has led to a tradition of stock rearing in the area.
- 7.2.3 The boundaries of the Feldon are not firmly established and for the purposes of this study they have been confined to the study area while the boundary with Dunsmore to the north has been drawn along the change from the Keuper Marl of the Feldon and the thin sandy soils of Dunsmore. The boundary between these two distinct drift geologies is the most significant one, as it is the drift geology that has shaped the character of these two areas more than any other factor.

ACA 2: Leam Valley

- 7.2.4 The Leam Valley is located at the north-western end of the Feldon region of Warwickshire. The river itself is narrow but is located within a broad floodplain with wider gravel terraces and gentle upper valley slopes. The underlying geology is of the Mercia Mudstone Series. As it crosses the study area the valley is sparsely populated with isolated farms and land use dominated by pasture and stock rearing with no

woodland. The land within the valley was enclosed through the 18th and 19th centuries with no common or heath land surviving to this day.

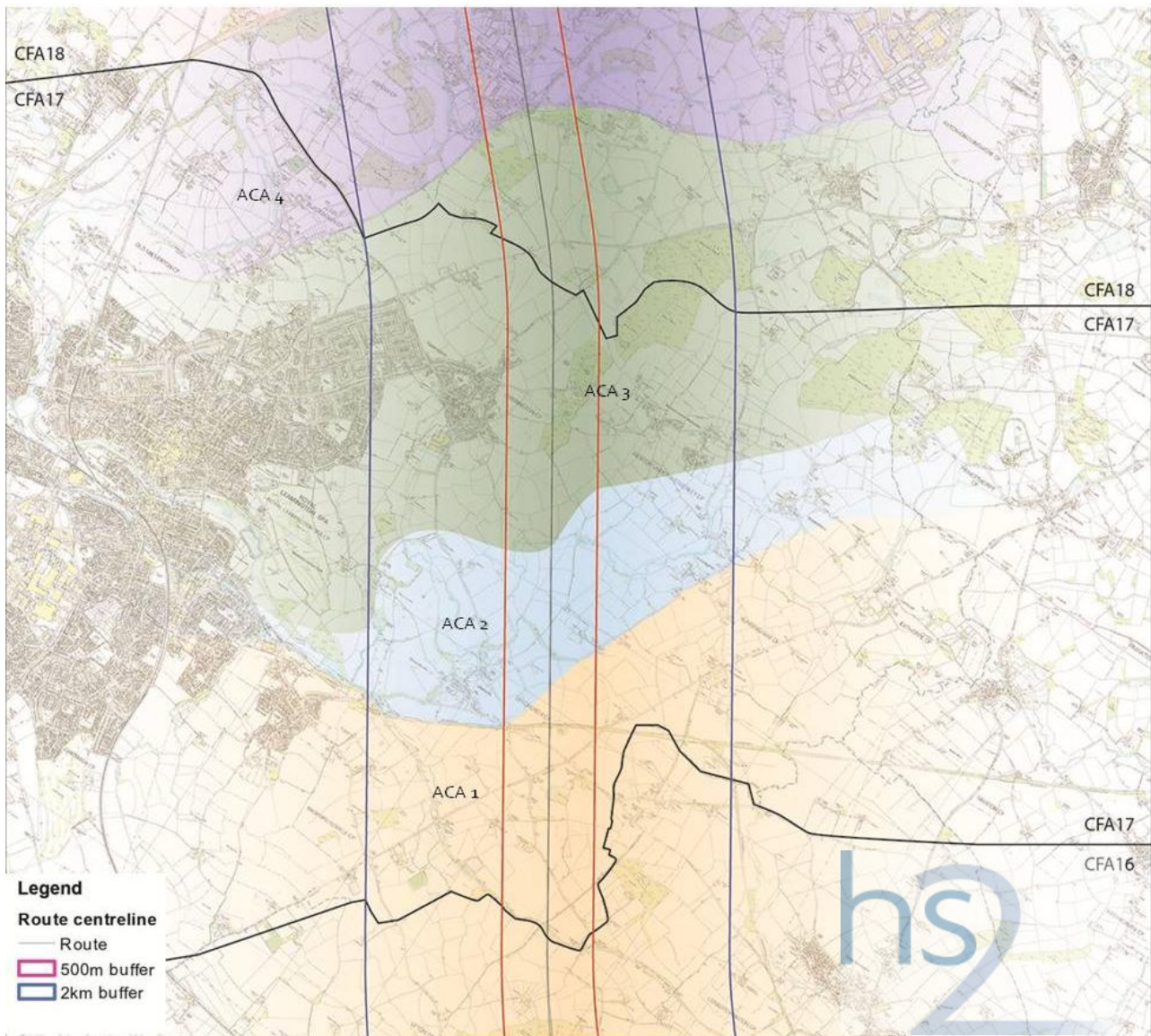
ACA 3: Dunsmore

- 7.2.5 Dunsmore is centred on an area of former heathland associated with a low plateau of glacial deposits. These deposits have led to the creation of poor quality thin soils which were worked in the prehistoric period, rapidly creating the heathlands which dominated the area until improvements in agriculture led to these areas being reclaimed for agriculture over the past two centuries. Like the Feldon area to the south, this is predominantly a planned landscape of large fields and small villages although unlike the Feldon it also has extensive woodlands. The area is primarily agricultural with extensive pasture and arable fields, many established over former areas of common land and heath, forming a flat, open landscape. The area within the study area is crossed by the narrow valley of the River Avon. This valley is mainly infilled with alluvial deposits from past flooding episodes although isolated areas of gravel terrace also occur. The arable fields often extend up to the river although there are also some surviving sections of remnant flood meadows. Much of the region was cleared of woodland and settled in prehistory especially on the easily worked soils of the main plateau and along the fertile river valleys. The higher areas appear to have been worked to exhaustion by the Anglo-Saxon period. The productive land was densely settled by the later medieval period and farmed in two and three field systems. Depopulation of the area continued slowly through the later medieval period with the land enclosed in the 18th and 19th centuries.

ACA4: Avon Valley

- 7.2.6 The River Avon crosses the study area to the south-east of Kenilworth. It is located within a narrow, steep-sided valley that has been cut through the thin glacial soils of the Arden. It has substantial gravel terraces on either side of its course which have proved attractive locations for agriculture and sparse settlements from the prehistoric period onwards. The floodplain has also been developed with watermills established at various points along its course.

Figure 1: Archaeological character area



7.3 Archaeological sub-zones

- 7.3.1 The ASZs are presented in Table 1 from south to north. An indication of archaeological potential for each sub-zone is provided. Plans showing the sub-zones can be found in the Volume 5 Map Book CH-03.

Appendix CH-001-017 | Archaeological character

Table 1: Archaeological Sub-zones

No	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic character (HLC)	Archaeology (from baseline DBA)
1	Grand Union Valley	Covers the south-east facing slopes of the former river valley now occupied by the Grand Union Canal.	Drift geology of head deposits, a mixture of gravels, clays and alluvium.	The slopes to the north-west of the canal are gentle and covered with enclosed pasture.	There are two small areas of woodland immediately to the south of the canal which may be remnants of medieval managed forests.	The canal itself is 19 th century in origin
2	Grand Union and Leam	This sub-zone occupies the upper steeper slopes of the valley containing the Grand Union Canal up to the watershed with the Leam Valley to the north-west.	The underlying geology is mainly made up of terrace gravels.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	The area is crossed south-west to north-east by the line of the former Roman road, the Fosse Way.
3	SE Leam	This sub-zone covers the upper south-east slopes of the Leam Valley.	The underlying superficial geology is mainly river gravels and some head deposits.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	The medieval village core of Offchurch is located on the south-west edge of this zone, while a number of fields containing surviving medieval ridge-and-furrow field systems have been identified across the slopes to the north-west of the village.
4	Upper Leam (E&W)	Occupies the upper slopes of the Leam Valley to the east and west of the river.	Underlain by a drift geology consisting mainly of gravels and head deposits.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	Cropmark sites have been identified within the sub-zone to the north-east of the river (A2024-5).
5	East Leam	This sub-zone covers the first terrace of the River Leam to the east of the river itself.	This area is underlain wholly by river gravel deposits.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	No sites have yet been recorded within the sub-zone
6	Leam Floodplain	Occupies the floodplain of the River Leam	The superficial underlying geology of this zone is alluvium.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	No sites have yet been recorded within the sub-zone
7	Leam NW	This sub-zone covers the first terrace of the River Leam to the north and west of the river itself.	This area is underlain wholly by river gravel deposits.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	No sites have yet been recorded within the sub-zone.

No	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic character (HLC)	Archaeology (from baseline DBA)
8	Upper Leam (NW)	Occupies the upper slopes of the Leam Valley to the north-west of the river.	These are underlain by a bedrock geology consisting of the Mercia Mudstone Series.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	No sites have been identified within the sub-zone.
9	Dunsmore Plateau	Covers the Dunsmore plateau, an area of glacial soils.	An area of glacial soils.	Utilised for managed woodland since the medieval period, some patches of which still survive.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	No pre-medieval features have been recorded within the zone to this date. A number of medieval ridge-and-furrow systems survive within the sub-zone, while the medieval core of Cubbington is located to the south-west. These ridge-and-furrow systems may be masking earlier features.
10	Bytham River	This sub-zone covers part of the projected route of the Bytham River through the north-western end of the study area.	Riverine alluvium and gravels.	Agricultural, mixed arable and grazing.	In continuous agricultural use for several centuries.	The sub-zone also contains a number of surviving medieval ridge-and-furrow systems which may be masking earlier features.

8 Analysis and research potential

8.1 Analysis of understanding

- 8.1.1 The River Leam is the major geographical feature in this CFA and the river and its valley has helped define activity in the past. The route will cross the river between the villages of Offchurch and Cubbington. To the south, the route will also cross the Grand Union Canal, sitting in a former river valley. The river and stream valleys all contain alluvium which has the potential to mask archaeological remains under consecutive layers of clay and silt and may also have potential to preserve palaeo-environmental remains in water logged conditions. The gravels associated with these rivers and streams may contain early prehistoric remains. Canal building activity in sub-zone 1 is likely to have disturbed some archaeological deposits but there is potential for fluvial deposits to survive on either side.
- 8.1.2 Sub-zones 2-8 all have good archaeological potential for the survival of remains associated with pre-medieval settlement. Almost all of the areas are made up of gravels which could contain features relating to settlement of past land use. In addition, sub-zone 6 is a floodplain where numerous episodes of seasonal flooding will have deposited silts which could conceal archaeological deposits of almost any date.
- 8.1.3 The over-riding character of modern land use within the CFA is arable agricultural fields, almost all areas have some archaeological potential as the area has been under cultivation for a considerable period of time, and there is no urban, industrial or extractive activity in the CFA which may have destroyed archaeological deposits. Modern farming methods in arable areas, as well as 19th century land drainage, may have damaged or destroyed archaeological deposits.
- 8.1.4 There are still pockets of woodland in the CFA and historically there appear to have been many more. The existing woodland may also hide features of archaeological value.
- 8.1.5 Two nucleated settlements are located within the study area (sub-zones 9 and 3). All have a high potential for remains dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods as all were established during these periods.
- 8.1.6 A review of baseline data has shown that there is a complete lack of palaeo-environmental evidence within the study area and a general lack of data from the surrounding landscape. The River Leam and the canal (in a former river valley) (sub-zones 1, 4, 7) within the study area have the potential to preserve palaeo-environmental evidence.
- 8.1.7 Perhaps the most important area of archaeological potential is the route of the former Bytham River. The study area crosses a low ridge, reaching c. 90m AOD, capped by a sequence of Baginton Sand and Gravel and Anglian glacial deposits in the vicinity of Cubbington. This corresponds to sub-zone 9, to a lesser extent sub-zone 1, and appears to be a continuation of the deposits recorded at the Waverley Quarry Complex c. 2km to the north-east at a similar elevation.
- 8.1.8 A review of British Geological Survey (BGS) boreholes for the study area revealed only two borehole records within sub-zone A209, one of which was not available to view

(SP36NW86). The other borehole (SP36NW33) dates from 1978 and records 10m of deposits. The sedimentary descriptions suggest Quaternary deposits extend at least to 6.3m at this location over Mercia Mudstone.

- 8.1.9 Overall, taking into account the archaeological importance of the sequences recorded at the Waverley Wood sites, sub-zone A209 has high potential to preserve nationally important Lower Palaeolithic archaeological remains associated with the pre-Anglian Bytham River. If preserved, these remains are likely to be closer to the current ground surface where the Baginton sand and gravel outcrop, at the northern and southern boundaries. Beneath the Anglian deposits this may reach c. 6-11.5m below ground level (bgl) or more. At present there is very little direct subsurface data from sub-zone 9 to be more accurate. There is similar high potential where deposits are mapped in the south-eastern part of sub-zone 1. There is a moderate risk, at a site scale; of similar deposits not mapped by the BGS extending into sub-zones 10 and 8. The area of highest archaeological potential is considered to be on the gravel terraces of the Bytham River. It is clear from current knowledge that human occupation of the region in the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic was discontinuous and that a prime aim of research in the area should be in establishing the chronology, geographical extent and relative intensity of human activity and also in identifying colonisation routes³⁴. Much of the colonisation and habitation appears to have been concentrated along river valleys and the gravel terraces of the Avon valley will therefore be of particular interest to the development of this model. Despite the lack of Upper and Middle Palaeolithic finds in the region as a whole, the discovery of one in-situ site has the potential to transform understanding of these periods at a national level. In this respect the West Midlands has as much potential as any other region in England and the proximity of the Waverley Wood finds to the study area should be highlighted in anticipating possible archaeological issues born out of construction within the land required for construction. The Waverley Wood finds are of both national and international significance in relation to questions concerning the chronology and extent of the earliest human occupation of northern Europe and further work on it is a clear priority. While the site itself lies outside the study area, there is potential for further finds, possibly within the land required for construction.

8.2 Research potential and priorities

- 8.2.1 An archaeological Research Framework for the West Midlands³⁵ provides an introduction to key themes of research in the region by period. The framework does not identify priorities for research within or between periods. However, reflecting the potential of the land required for the Proposed Scheme in this CFA, and drawing on the general themes identified in the published research framework, the following questions could provide the focus for investigation carried out in this study area in terms of period based and multi-period based landscape research:
- can the gravels of the Bytham River contribute to a chronology for the first humans in Britain and evidence of the nature of early prehistoric activity which has, to date, not been identified within the study area?

³⁴ Garwood, 2011.

³⁵ Watt, S., ed. (2011) *The Archaeology of the west midlands: a framework for research*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

- can waterlogged deposits within the study area provide evidence of the environment in the prehistoric and Romano-British periods?
- what can artefact concentrations from varying soil types tell us about exploitation of the landscape in the prehistoric periods?
- how does soil chemistry in the study area affect the preservation of archaeological remains and how has that influenced our understanding of human activity in the Palaeolithic period?
- to what extent have agricultural practices such as ploughing removed evidence for prehistoric monuments such as barrows and henges and what can cropmarks tell us about late prehistoric exploitation of the landscape?
- the Fosse Way was one of the arterial routes of Roman Britain, yet apart from this (and despite substantial Roman sites to the north) there is little evidence of settlement and agricultural activity in the study area. How did the road influence the settlement pattern in this area and how were the rich local resources exploited in the Roman period?
- was the continuing national significance of the Fosse Way as a trade route reflected in settlement or material culture in the medieval period?
- was the valley of the Leam and the river itself exploited in the medieval period through the development of facilities such as water-meadows and mills?
- what impact did the Second World War have on the study area? How much can we learn from local defence measures and the Starfish site?

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